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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 SANAA 000268

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TAGS: [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [YM](#) [EAC](#)

SUBJECT: SANAA EAC MEETING 02/06/2005

REF: TD-314/07236-05

Classified By: RSO Tim Laas, for reasons 1.4 (b) (c) and (d).

1.(S/NF) Begin Summary - The DCM convened a core EAC meeting on February 6, 2005, to review current threat conditions. RMAS noted recent threat reporting (REFTD) focused on the Sheraton Hotel and Tourist City located adjacent to the U.S. Embassy and used by American TDY personnel and contractors. As part of the EAC discussion, members reviewed security arrangements at temporary lodging to include Tourist City and the Sheraton Hotel. Based on available information, EAC members recommended that the RSO immediately review the security situation at Tourist City and the Sheraton Hotel with Ministry of Interior contacts to ascertain whether MOI has new threat related information and ensure a heightened focus on life safety at these facilities. Key offices and personnel represented included: DCM, FPD, CCE-Y, RMAS, POL/ECON, DAO, LEGATT and RSO. End Summary.

2. (S/NF) RMAS briefed the EAC about current threat concerns in Sanaa, followed by EAC recommendations that the RSO seek further clarification regarding what MOI knows about possible threats to Tourist City, the Sheraton Hotel or any other location where Americans may cluster in soft-target sites.

3. (S/NF) The following issues were discussed or decided upon during the EAC meeting:

- RSO will review with MOI and PSO, ROYG's current commitment to protect the Sheraton Hotel, where USG TDY personnel cluster. RSO last visited security at the Sheraton with the hotel manager and his staff in December 2004, loaning the hotel a walk-through metal detector with training: Hotel management now screens hotel staff when they report to work as they enter the hotel staff entrance. EAC members also noted the relative hardness of the Sheraton Hotel, which has more than 100 feet of standoff, armed sentries on the perimeter and chemical explosive and walk-through metal detector screening of guests and employees. RSO advised EAC members that he last met with MOI regarding the Sheraton's perimeter security in October 2004, to discuss improvements in internal security and vigilance on the part of ROYG at the Sheraton Hotel. Additionally, EAC members were made aware of recent upgrades to the perimeter wall to include re-stationing of a 10 man crew manning a Toyota truck mounted heavy machine gun on the perimeter and repairs that have been made to gaps in the hotel perimeter wall reducing the threat of intruders.

- Based on RMAS and EAC concerns, RSO will emphasize the maintenance of alert and aggressive MOI elements on the Sheraton hotel's perimeter as well as ask for continued scrutiny by senior ROYG officials on the training, equipping and competence of PSO security personnel working within the interior of the hotel, to prevent unauthorized vehicles from approaching the hotel and intruders in the interior. (RSO Comment: The RSO currently works with the hotel management, Sheraton Guards and MOI elements to provide explosive detection screening of vehicles and packages approaching the hotel perimeter and augments spot patrols of the hotel grounds to detect security anomalies. Additionally, RSO met with hotel management in November to discuss the hiring and screening practices of hotel staff focusing on long-term employees with good records as well as vetting of recent hires with the goal of preventing criminals, access to internal hotel operations).

- EAC members discussed Tourist City and noted that a non-governmental development program contracted by USAID operates out of office space on the compound and three individuals reside on the compound. RSO briefed EAC members about problems with current perimeter security at Tourist City, created by property management's use of three gates from where numerous persons enter and exit throughout the day to include: Residents, health club members, and person patronizing the bar and disco known as the Russian Club. (RSO Comment: Tourist City is a Ministry of Defense property and gate guards are from the MOD not the MOI, limiting RSO's ability to conduct low level liaison with MOD officials

responsible for the compound. Post policy has prevented clusters of USG personnel from residing on Tourist City for the past year, requiring RSO concurrence to reside in Tourist City, due to the inability of the MOB to properly screen the public coming and going from the Tourist City compound. USAID contracted office space at Tourist City recently posted a guard and installed metal, locking doors at the entrance to reduce the possibility of an intruder - however, no stand-off currently exists on the office space perimeter).

14. (SBU) RSO briefed the Core EAC about a more formalized procedure, per COM guidance, that will be forthcoming requiring a written request, RSO survey and COM approval for anyone wishing to hold a large event at a soft-target site off of the Embassy compound. This procedure will ensure a carefully documented review and appropriate MOI participation of soft target events preventing haphazard clustering of Americans that could result in a mass casualty.

15. (S/NF) RSO briefed the EAC on a recent incident in which the Surveillance Detection Team spotted a suspicious vehicle using Saudi plates, following an Employee shuttle after the van departed the Embassy compound. The suspicious vehicle followed the shuttle for a few miles down the road before dropping off. EAC members were informed that RSO Surveillance Detection assets have focused on the Embassy shuttle van since November 2004, with only the above reported incident. (RSO Comment: The information was provided to MOI for investigative follow-up but RSO has received no results from the MOI. RMAS has been informed.)

16. (S/NF) DCM inquired as to whether Hadda Compound used an itemizer chemical explosive detection system. RSO informed the EAC that Hadda Compound did have an "itemizer" owned by an International Oil Company that was purchased for protecting Hadda Compound. However, the system was not functional until last week when the Diplomatic Security Engineering Security Officer provided technical advice, which has made the system operational again. RMAS suggested the post look into the possibility of using sniffing dogs as explosive detectors.

17. (SBU) EAC members were informed that measurements were ongoing for the installation of heavy-duty safe haven doors in each house (bedroom or other designated internal area). Also, the RSO is surveying each residence to provide upgrades where necessary, in locking hardware on external doors as well as safe-haven doors. EAC members discussed the fact that westerners that do not have a 24/7 guard presence, as do American Embassy officers, suffer a high degree of crimes to include breaking and entering against their residences. The EAC expects crime to rise in Yemen as oil prices raise as a result of planned removal of subsidies on fuel prices and a continued decline in national oil revenues.

18. (S/NF) EAC members were advised that an Embassy committee was meeting on February 8th, to address ongoing concerns about the lack of operational radios for the LGF in Sanaa. (RSO Comment: MO is pursuing with difficulty UHF radio frequencies for a LGF radio upgrade to support 117K USD in DS funded radio hardware. Currently, the LGF radio program is on an unauthorized VHF system that is not functioning for most residents). Radio operations in Sanaa are extremely difficult due to ROYG paranoia and harassment regarding the placement of repeaters within Sanaa.

19. (S/NF) The DCM and EAC tabled, for an upcoming EAC meeting, a review of security surrounding the Russian Club, a bar and disco located at Tourist City and frequented by the international community; Also tabled for an expanded EAC meeting was a review of the use of diplomatic CD 7 tags by American Embassy officers. Embassy policy had restricted use of diplomatic tags on American Embassy vehicles, but ongoing difficulty in getting private/local "blue" tags has put pressure on the Management Office to release cars to officers with diplomatic tags while waiting for ROYG to issue private plates. EAC members noted that diplomatic license plates may have drawn the attention of Ali Hasan Al-Mas, the Yemeni man who attempted to carry out an attack at a residence where U.S. diplomats were gathered, during his casing activity.

110. (S/NF) Based on RMAS and EAC threat concerns, RSO will request a meeting with MOI and PSO officials over the next week to review security programs for the Embassy community focusing especially on the Sheraton Hotel, Tourist City, locations off the Embassy compound where large numbers of Americans gather as well as the employee shuttle.

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